

BOSTON BREATHES BETTER
Working Group Meeting
Friday, March 12, 2004

The Boston Breathes Better Working Group met to discuss the Boston Breathes Better Initiative.

Existing EPA Mobile Source Voluntary Programs

EPA noted that they have several existing voluntary programs to reduce pollution from transportation sources, but hope to frame and market them under a single, local effort. The current programs are:

- Voluntary diesel retrofit programs, funded primarily with either SEP (supplemental environmental projects) monies from enforcement actions or through national grants (www.epa.gov/otaq/retrofit). The Clean School Buses USA program (www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus) is an outgrowth of the voluntary diesel retrofit program and focuses exclusively on school buses.
- Anti-idling efforts that are primarily low cost and educational in nature.
- Smart Way Transportsm Partnership is a collaborative voluntary program between EPA and the freight industry that seeks to increase the energy efficiency and energy security of our country while significantly reducing air pollution and greenhouse gases. SmartWaysm Transport Partnership Partners improve the efficiency of their operations, save money, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality (www.epa.gov/smartway).
- Best Workplaces for Commuterssm, a voluntary program that recognizes and assists employers who provide outstanding commuter benefits such as transit, vanpool, and/or carpool subsidies, or robust telecommuting programs, which help reduce air pollution and energy use (www.bwc.gov). This program complements the state's mandatory Rideshare rule, which affects employers with more than 250 employees.

Role of Working Group

The following comments were made regarding the role of the Working Group.

- The group could make suggestions on the overall direction of the pilot, as well as potential specific projects.
- A "mailbox" where good ideas can be stored for consideration would be helpful.
- The group could provide a network of partners to learn from, mentor, and expand the effort.
- This group could help engage others such as the City of Cambridge, motivated neighborhoods like South Boston, and members of Clean Cities, as well as trade

associations like the General Contractors Association. They are safety focused, but may have an interest in this under the right incentives/conditions.

Draft Project Description Comments

The following comments were offered.

- Talk about incentives right away. Dollar savings? Access to technical assistance? Innovation? Loans and grants? What about life cycle costs, purchasing times, joint purchasing pools?
- Need a stronger hook. Right away talk about why we should care about this initiative. Right now it sounds like you've got it under control and don't need us.
- Define the additional hooks: Avoiding non-attainment? What does this mean? What if we don't avoid it, what then? Tax deductions? Health improvement? Dollar savings? Improved fuel economy?
- Before we get too far, we need good baseline air quality data. Information about where we are starting from – public health issues, air quality, emissions inventories, etc.
- Clarify exactly who we are trying to persuade and incentivize.
- Tell the MASCO story, something others can relate to and learn from.
- Tell the Brooklyn Clam Shack retrofit story.
- Tell the Harvard biodiesel story or the Tufts recycled biodiesel story.
- Have a short, single document. Why should we care? What can be done? Why should I do it? What help do I get?
- Need a visual graphic or structure. How does Boston Breathes Better relate to existing EPA programs? To other initiatives? Is this simply a broader name? Builds on existing programs? Includes other innovative projects underway?
- The geographic area needs to be the greater Boston metro area. Boston Breathes Better needs a better name.
- Establish short and long-term time frames and targets.
- Find a balance between demonstrators (using existing technologies) and innovators (using new technologies). The latter is flashier but the former probably delivers greater reductions.
- There's lots of action already happening. Why should people get involved in this? Why something new?
- What does this mean to me (not the agency)? For example, the air stinks. My kids are breathing bad air. I might incur the regulatory hammer if we reach non-attainment?
- Need clarity on the current state of things – air quality, asthma cases, sick days, economic impacts – and what future state we're trying to achieve and what future state we're trying to avoid (non-attainment, regulatory hammers, increased trends in lower air quality and poor health outcomes).

Draft Program Goals/Outcomes Comments

The following comments were offered.

- It's wordy; need to captivate attention. Consider shortening, re-ordering and focusing goals and outcomes.
- What's the big goal or vision? What are our objectives under that goal? What specific tasks under that objective are we going to undertake?
- Goal should be big and have lofty hook: "Make Boston the cleanest city."
- Some of the goals are objectives/methods. Keep objectives doable.
- When the city cleaned the harbor, people loved the idea. Could say something like "we've cleaned the water, now let's clean the air."
- Consider adding pieces that state incentives and cost savings, i.e., each person that bikes to work can save money and clean air.
- Brainstorm a number of possible incentives to motivate players.
- Perhaps the goal is: "Reduce air emissions from transportation sources in order to improve health outcomes."
- How are we can measure our efforts? How are we going to measure our success?

Ideas for Events and Actions

The following comments were offered.

- Consider tradeoffs: if you come in quietly and target certain groups, it gives a certain amount of freedom and latitude. If you do a big forum and come in with a loud bang, then you are more committed to a plan that may not be the right plan.
- Workshops can be done in a non-confrontational manner and be effective as a starting point. We could plan a big forum at a later date.
- Start small, get exposure, and gauge interest. This would allow us to see if the message is palatable and make appropriate adjustments/refinements
- Recognize those groups that are already doing public good and build off of existing efforts/forums. For instance, Clean Cities, the Transportation Demand Management conference, the US Green Building Council.
- Could marine vessels be part of the action to reduce emissions?
- Link to education efforts and programs like the Children's museum, the Science Museum, the WBOS Art Forum, etc.
- A sector by sector approach may help us focus the message, goals, and outcomes.

Action Items

- Develop a short, single document that addresses the key issues:

- Why should we care? What can be done? Why should I do it? What help do I get? What are the incentives? Dollar savings?
- Mention other benefits of involvement, such as access to technical assistance, possible loans and grants?
- Need a stronger hook. Right away talk about why we should care about this initiative.
- There's lots of action already happening. Why should people get involved in this? Why something new?
- What does this mean to me (not the agency)? For example, the air stinks. My kids are breathing bad air. I might incur the regulatory hammer if we reach non-attainment?
- Provide clarity on the current state of air quality, asthma cases, sick days, economic impacts – and what future state we're trying to achieve and what future state we're trying to avoid (non-attainment, regulatory hammers, increased trends in lower air quality and poor health outcomes).
- Develop some alternative names for the pilot to reflect its broader geographic scope.
- Develop documents to tell some of the existing local success stories, including the MASCO story, the Harvard biodiesel story or the Tufts recycled biodiesel story.
- Establish short and long-term time frames and targets for the pilot.
- Schedule the next meeting.